



CARPOPHAGA MAGNIFICA.

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Magnificent Fruit Pigeon.

Columba magnifica, Temm. in Linn. Trans., vol. xiii. p. 125.—Ib. Pl. Col. 163.—Wagl. Syst. Av. Columba, sp. 26.
—Less. Traité d'Orn., p. 469.

Carpophaga magnifica, Selby in Nat. Lib. Orn., vol. v. Pigeons, p. 115.—List of Birds in Brit. Mus. Coll., Part III. p. 5.

THIS splendid bird, the finest of the Pigeons yet discovered in Australia, is abundant in all the brushes on the south-east portion of that country, but is less numerous in the Illawarra district than in the neighbourhood of the rivers Namoi, Macquarrie, Clarence and MacLeay; how far its range may extend from thence to the northward has yet to be ascertained; I did not observe it in any of the brushes clothing the ranges of the interior. Its chief food is the wild fig and the nut-like fruit of the large palms. It is rather a shy bird, and from its quiet habits is not easily discovered, unless it betrays its presence by the hoarse, loud and monotonous note, which is frequently uttered by the male during the season of love. This note is so extraordinary, and so unlike that of any other bird, that it causes the utmost surprise and wonderment as to what it can proceed from, in the minds of those persons who hear it for the first time.

I regret that the few opportunities I had for studying this fine bird in a state of nature were insufficient for me to obtain any particulars respecting its habits and economy; it appears never to descend to the ground, but to be constantly engaged among the branches in procuring its food; its broad hand-like feet enabling it to cling to the outermost and even the smaller boughs with ease; and hence the utility of these singularly constructed feet, which are common to all the Fruit Pigeons, is readily perceptible.

The sexes present no external difference by which the male can be distinguished from the female; dissection must, in fact, be resorted to, to discriminate the one from the other with certainty, although the smaller-sized individuals may generally be regarded as females.

Head and neck pale grey; all the upper surface and wings rich golden green; the greater coverts and the tertiaries with a patch of light yellow near the base of the outer webs, forming an irregular oblique band across the wing; primaries green; under surface of the wing brown, passing into cinnamon-brown at the base of the feathers; tail rich deep bronzy green; line down the centre of the throat, and the whole of the breast and abdomen rich deep purple; under surface of the shoulder, the thighs and vent deep gamboge-yellow; under tail-coverts greenish grey, washed with gamboge-yellow.

The Plate represents an adult male somewhat less than the natural size.